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TAGS: [IZ](#) [KDEM](#) [PGOV](#) [PINS](#)
SUBJECT: PRT ANBAR: IRAQ DEPUTY NSA ON ANBAR

Classified by Political Counselor Margaret Scobey, reasons
1.4 (b) and (d).

[¶1.](#) (S/REL MCFI) Summary. Iraqi Deputy National Security Advisor (NSA) Safa A. Hussein provided an analysis to Anbar PRT PolOff October 19 of recent developments in Anbar regarding reconciliation between the provincial government and the tribes. He expressed cautious optimism regarding the possibility of quelling insurgent activity in Anbar. Safa also stated that the offer of the Sunni tribes to declare the Coalition Forces (CF) as a "friendly force" would go a long way toward reducing violence. End Summary.

[¶2.](#) (S/REL MCFI) On October 19, Iraqi Deputy NSA Safa A. Hussain (Shia) and Anbar PRT PolOff discussed reconciliation between the Anbar provincial government and the Sunni tribes. PolOff provided Safa a read-out of the October 17 meeting at Camp Fallujah between Anbar Governor Ma'amoun Sami Rasheed Al-Awani and Sheikh Sattar Al-Rishawi, mediated by MNF-W Commanding General Richard Zilmer (septel).

Positive, But Use Caution

[¶3.](#) (S/REL MCFI) Safa called meetings between the Anbar government and the Anbari tribes were an extremely positive development. He attributed tribal cooperation to their acceptance of the fact that the democratic process is here to stay in Iraq. He concluded the tribes are now looking to become a part of that process, since their boycott of the January 2005 provincial elections left the Anbari tribes without any governmental positions. Since the Iraqi Islamic Party (IIP), which is highly unpopular among many tribal members, is the dominant Sunni political force in the Anbar provincial government, Safa continued, reconciliation by the tribes allows them to get into the political process.

[¶4.](#) (S/REL MCFI) Safa characterized Sattar as highly influential in Anbar. However, he urged skepticism about the extent of Sattar's ability to effectively fight Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI). He may promise more than he can actually deliver, Safa warned. Safa claimed out Sattar has made his living as a "smuggler;" he is therefore likely looking to better position himself (NOTE: In the October 17 Al-Awani/Sattar meeting, Sattar procured the appointment of fellow Anbari sheikh, Sheikh Wisam Hardan Abu Itha, in the position of managing border customs affairs. END NOTE).

Coalition Forces -- "Friendly Force"

[¶5.](#) (S/REL MCFI) Safa characterized the Anbar tribes as pragmatic, drawing a comparison to how Iraqi tribes dealt with the UK in the 1920s. He agreed that their continued statements of friendship with CF are genuine, but only insofar as they realize that CF are here to stay in one form or another for the foreseeable future. The tribes recognize

it is in their best interest to now work with the U.S. Safa did stress that the tribes trust the CF more than the central or provincial governments. In turn, Safa assured, the GOI trusts the CF more than the tribes.

¶6. (SBU) Regarding the comment Sattar made at the October 17 meeting that the "CF was a Friendly Force," Safa responded that it would be a remarkable statement that would have immediate material effect -- if made publicly and widely. He encouraged the USG to aggressively pursue that public relations statement as it would benefit everyone by leading to reduced violence and hostility.

PRT Comment

¶7. (S/REL MCFI) We will follow up on Sattar,s statement declaring the CF a "friendly force." He has already used this wording in interviews, but a strong public statement with just that one message would be useful to increasing local support for us. As a secular Shia Arab, Safa has no particular stake in the outcome of the political wrangling in Anbar except that a reduction in violence and advancement in reconstruction projects there is in the GOI,s overall best interest. Given his prominence in the GOI and long, effective working relationship with the U.S. Mission in Iraq, his views are worth noting as we continue our engagement in Anbar.

KHALILZAD